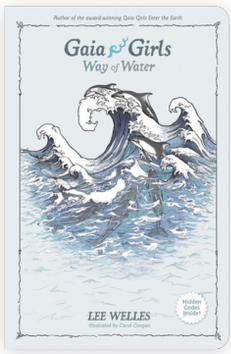
Reading Challenge Faves The most-read books by 2026 participants (so far)



Want to Read

Kindle $9.99

Rate this book

Gaia Girls #2

Way of Water

Lee Welles, Carol Coogan (Illustrator)

4.21 226 ratings · 27 reviews

Winner of the 2008 NAUTILUS GOLD AWARD in the category of Young Adult Fiction/Fantasy Winner of the 2008 MOM'S CHOICE GOLD AWARD in the category of juvenile fiction (ages 9-12)Miho's backyard had always been the sea. The creatures within it were an endless source of fascination. But when the sea steals away her small family, she finds herself the ward of an uncle she has never met and submerged in a world she has never Japan. From the city of Nagoya to the seaside town of Goza, Miho struggles to fit in and navigate the language, the culture and her own grief. It is in Goza that she discovers her surprising family history and finds new teachers. She is befriended by an old man who becomes her Sensei and teaches her Sho-do, The Way of the Brush. And it is there she meets Gaia, the living entity of the Earth. Gaia grants her amazing powers to connect with the "minds in the water" and Miho is given access and understanding to all the world's oceans. Will she be able to use her powers to help balance the traditions of the past with the demands of the present? Can she overcome her outsider status to help others understand The Way of Water?

Genres Fantasy Young Adult Fiction Middle Grade Childrens

425 pages, Hardcover

First published January 1, 2007

Book details & editions

7 people are currently reading

138 people want to read

About the author

Lee Welles

4 books · 43 followers

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I am an accidental author. I had no idea I was going to be a writer until about 7 years ago. I began to write a weekly wellness column as a way to promote my business. I was happily surprised by the feedback from the public. They often mentioned how much they enjoyed not only the information, but the way I wrote.

I began to explore the option of freelance writing for magazines and, in the course of my self-directed learning, stumbled upon "The Playful Way to Serious Writing" by Roberta Allen. I discovered that my imagination runs amok given the least provocation!

When I had the idea for Gaia Girls, I told my hubby, a third-grade teacher. He hounded me until I wrote book one. God bless him.

Ratings & Reviews

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Community Reviews

4.21 226 ratings · 27 reviews

5 stars		106 (46%)
4 stars		70 (30%)
3 stars		43 (19%)
2 stars		6 (2%)
1 star		1 (<1%)

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Displaying 1 - 27 of 27 reviews

Lizzie

10 reviews

Follow

★★★★☆ July 8, 2007

This is a new YA series from Chelsea Green, and they sent me the second book because I ordered the first one sight unseen. With all the series books written for kids, why not one that promotes Gaia-consciousness? It was engaging, interesting, a little melodramatic (but then most teen lit is). When her parents, scientists studying whale songs and migration, are lost at sea, ten-year-old Miho is sent to live with an uncle she has never met halfway around the world in Japan. Uncle is a chain-smoking, overworked batchelor, and Miho misses the ocean, her parents, and keeps having dreams of a sea otter that she chased after instead of joining her parents on their ill-fated final trip. Then Uncle announces they are going to the family home on the coast for a holiday, and Miho's life suddenly switches into high gear.
Totally believable. I think this book will be welcomed by any kid who has slogged through their fair share of books, wondering why so few of them push anything other than a manifest destiny/dominion over the earth mindset.

3 likes

Like Comment •••

Claire

15 reviews
3 followers

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★★★★★ September 24, 2016

Fantastic second book in the Gaia Girls series, which will eventually be SEVEN books (though at this rate my daughter will outgrow them before they're all published!)

The story is full of adventure and magic and intrigue, while teaching the reader (both subtly and not-so-subtly) tips for taking care of our precious waters. As an added bonus in this book, you also get a nice collection of Japanese culture and vocabulary. There is urgency and conflict and disaster and tragedy - difficult subjects are not sugar-coated, but addressed with realism and honesty. This book is PERFECT for kids in the mid-to-higher elementary grades. Also great because the protagonist is a girl who discovers her power (personal AND supernatural) and learns from Gaia, who takes the form of an otter, that one individual CAN make a difference. She also learns about relationships, and how to interact with all kinds of people.

The book has fun learning activities in the back like word puzzles and scavenger hunts. Each illustration in the book has a secret letter hidden in it somewhere, and if you collect all the letters in order they spell out a message.

My daughter and I highly recommend this book!

1 like

Like Comment •••

Brooke

4 reviews

Follow

★★★★★ February 20, 2008

REALLY GOOD BOOK IT IS A MUST READ FOR OCEANLOVER AND TREEE HUGGERS

1 like

Like Comment •••

Kari

1,322 reviews
11 followers

Follow

★★★★★ July 20, 2017

Found this in a Carmel, CA bookstore - the cover and quick read said 'buy me' because I love the Ocean and Japanese culture. The second in the Gaia Girls series with water now the focus instead of the land. Gaia comes to Miho as an otter to show her the way of her powers with the ocean and sea creatures. As a 'half' she learns about her Japanese side as her parents die (of course) leaving her with a grumpy uncle in Japan. Excellent story for those young readers (and old) who enjoy learning about environmental dangers we put upon the earth without making you super-depressed but more motivated for change.

elementary-read fantasy fiction

Like Comment •••

Elizabeth

11 reviews

Follow

★★★★★ October 30, 2022

Amazing! I wish the author would write more!

Like Comment •••

Julie

3,611 reviews
50 followers

Follow

★★☆☆☆ March 21, 2016

This book annoyed me on several levels. I read Gaia Girls: Enter the Earth a while ago, so I figured that since it was a local author and the first book was decent, I would keep plugging away. Now I'm a little sorry (although, I will probably still borrow the forthing coming couple out of the library when they arrive).

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2008 fantasy fiction ...more

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Gaia4173

2 reviews

Follow

★★★★★ July 1, 2010

How is it that the second book is as good as the first in the series (Enter the Earth)?

I love how Miho represents someone familiar yet foreign. I also appreciate how the book can stand alone, yet how Way of Water ties to Enter the Earth. I enjoyed learning about Japanese culture, especially shodo. It makes me sad and angry to know that the tragedies of the dolphins in this book are real. I enjoyed Miho's powers of water and communication, as well as the changing dynamic of her relationship with her uncle.

I've been checking Amazon.com for several years now in anticipation of the 3rd book, Air Apparent. I've heard this is supposed to be a seven book series. I am a educator, and I've shared these books with several of my students. I'd love for them to be able to continue the series. Lee, how's your progress? You have my #1 next read in your imagination! I miss Gaia Girls!

Like Comment •••

Hannah

8 reviews

Follow

★★★★★ August 29, 2008

This book I was SO excited about. A while before it came out, my friend showed me savethewhalesagain.com. This website is about the dolphin slaughter in Japan and stopping it. There is also a sad video of Hayden Pantierre, the TV star, surfing out with a few other people and trying to get the people to stop it. They get arrested for interfearing though, and Hayden said "I saw a little baby out there wailing for its mom, and I know where its mom is and I know it won't see her again" or something like that.

Anyways, this book is GREAT!! I've already recommended it to my friend and its DEFINETLY one to read!

Like Comment •••

Megan

163 reviews

2 followers

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★★★★☆ October 6, 2008

With these crazy news cycles, I needed something to take my mind off what was going on. These books are a good escape. Gaia (Mother Earth) appears in the form of an otter to Elizabeth and Miho and gives them powers to protect the earth from the harmful ways of humans. Of the two, I enjoyed "The Way of Water" more. There are multiple layers to this book that involve identity and belonging. I'd recommend them to any 4-8 grader and adult looking for a fun read. You can't go wrong with these earth warriors!

Like Comment •••

Kelsi

3 reviews

1 follower

Follow

★★★★★ August 9, 2011

I loved this book; it was interesting to me and informative too. The only concern I have is there was a very graphic part involving dolphins being killed. If I had been an 8-year-old rather than an adult it might have been too much. As it is, it reminded me of the movie The Cove and was hard to read. I loved the first book even more, but that might be because I see myself more on a organic farm than in Japan!

I plan to recommend this book and the series to my seventh grade students this fall. I've already recommended it to friends (with and without kids)!

Like Comment •••

Amie Doughty

415 reviews

5 followers

Follow

★★★☆☆ March 21, 2013

This installment of the series was far better story-wise, though again the main character was a bit too good to be true (not to the same extreme as Elizabeth in the first book, but not far away). My larger concern with the novel is the appropriation of Japanese culture, which Welles shapes to fit her story line (most notably when she moves the dates of the dolphin slaughters). Many of the Japanese characteristics seem quite stereotypical, which detracts from the story for me. And as with Enter the Earth, Way of Water's sledge-hammer-like message is too much for me.

kiddie-lit

Like Comment •••

MacKenzie

4 reviews

6 followers

Follow

★★★★☆ May 29, 2009

I read this book as part of a book buddies program, and was not expecting to like it all that much. After all, my 4th grade buddy picked it! I was proved wrong. I really, really enjoyed it. Beginning to end. It was very exciting and magical, while still managing to be educational and informative. I must go back and read the first one now!

Like Comment •••

Jacqueline
466 reviews
26 followers
Follow

★★★☆☆ December 21, 2009

Gaia Girls: Way of Water was a huge improvement over the first book in the series, Enter the Earth. Although the story still didn't flow as I would have liked, the characters were more realistic and better developed, and the plot was much more interesting!

jf

Like Comment •••

Jennifer
175 reviews
9 followers
Follow

★★★☆☆ January 26, 2012

Interesting and very timely on environmental issues. However, there were many times I wanted to call Child Protective Services on her guardian and felt the negligence and lack of communication were unrealistic.

young-adult

Like Comment •••

Paula Mckinley
155 reviews
3 followers
Follow

★★★☆☆ January 16, 2014

The second book in the Gaia girls series, it is an excellent read. Not only does this give kids a great perspective of the environment but as well as the culture in Japan. I love her writing style as it's simple, well crafted and poetic.

Like Comment •••

Bre
105 reviews
1 follower
Follow

★★★★★ December 27, 2015

Lee Welles does such an amazing job. I love how much I learned about Japanese culture. I'm very excited for the next book and I absolutely love the small forshadowing of the next character that she created in the book. Absolutely brilliant writing.

Like Comment •••

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cassie
31 reviews
2 followers
Follow

★★★★★ September 9, 2008

I love this book!!!!

Like Comment •••

Parker
2 reviews
Follow

★★★★★ November 5, 2008

I also love this one! She really met the challnge to write a great book to live up to the first. I had a great time reading it and learning about Japan.

Like Comment •••

Cecily
38 reviews
1 follower
Follow

★★★☆☆ March 20, 2009

it was still really good. but it definitely wasnt as good as the first one.

Like Comment •••

Dawn
24 reviews
5 followers
Follow

★★☆☆☆ January 16, 2010

This wasn't terrible, but I found myself struggling to get through it. I loved the first book in this series, so I was disappointed to have such trouble with this one.

2010

Like Comment •••

Jacqueline
10 reviews
Follow

★★★★★ June 18, 2009

Even better than Book One, "Gaia Girls Enter the Earth"...a grittier and more complex tale. These are supposedly kids books..but I love them. Book 3, please!

Like Comment •••

Alice
768 reviews
23 followers

★★★★★ November 2, 2009

As fun as the first, but since it's set in Japan there are also lots of Japanese words and cultural concepts. And, of course, a good old dose of environmentalism!

Follow

asia environmental fiction ...more

Like Comment •••

Tara

249 reviews
7 followers

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★★★★☆ August 20, 2010

I would have gone crazy for these books as a young girl! As and adult I really liked this one, but want more from the story and plot.

Like Comment •••

Devon

38 reviews
7 followers

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★★★★★ December 13, 2009

LOVED this book too. Can't wait for the third book to come out but no sign of it yet.

2 comments

Like Comment •••

Emma

3 reviews

Follow

★★★☆☆ November 8, 2010

Kinda sad though...

Like Comment •••

Chloe

150 reviews
2 followers

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★★★★★ September 23, 2013

Amazing.

Like Comment •••

Ava

79 reviews

Follow

★★★★☆ March 31, 2017

Such an amazing book for young readers. I read this book in school and I absolutely adored it. I then checked the first one out at the library and devoured it. I loved this series and was disappointed that more have not come out. I will definitely read any more books that come from this author.

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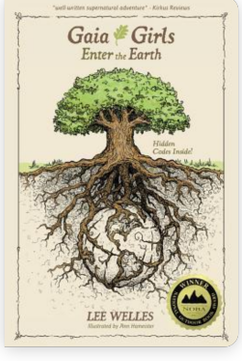
Gaia Girls Series



#1
Enter the Earth
Lee Welles
★ 4.06 · 360

#2
Way of Water
Lee Welles
★ 4.21 · 226

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